

Initial Regional Governance Alternatives

This is an introduction to six potential regional transit governance alternatives. These alternatives build upon and further detail work done in the Regional Transit Institutional Analysis. Each potential governance structure is briefly described and unanswered questions and unresolved issues associated with each alternative are highlighted. Finally, a matrix comparing each alternative is provided.

These alternatives are **not** fully developed; rather they are meant as strawmen scenarios. They are presented in an effort to spur discussion among policy makers. Staff anticipates that the TPB will narrow the focus to some subset or hybrid of the alternatives presented. Staff will then further flesh out the two or three scenarios preferred by the Board, adding associated legal wording, functional structures, etc. to each of the preferred alternatives.

The six alternatives for discussion are:

1. RTIA Recommended Transit Services Board
2. State Department of Intermodal Transportation
3. MARTA Expansion into Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett
4. MARTA splitting into MARTA Management and MARTA Operations – separate organizations
5. Regional Funding and Project Management Agency
6. Regional Transit Operations / Construction Agency

Option #1 – RTIA Recommended Transit Services Board

Scenario Description

The Transit Services Board (TSB) recommended in the Regional Transit Institutional Analysis (RTIA) would be a partnership between state and local governments that would establish and maintain a seamless, integrated public transportation network for the Atlanta region. The composition of the Board would be probably similar to the existing composition of the Transit Planning Board.

The TSB would:

- Oversee service coordination among all regional transit operators;
- Advocate for state and federal funding for regional transit projects and service;
- Distribute new regional transit funds (both capital and operating) to the transit providers based on designated criteria;
- Oversee the financial and operational performance of all regional transit providers;
- Identify and implement the preferred operational and financial arrangements for major new transit services in the region (e.g., bus rapid transit) as well as potential changes to existing service provision arrangements.

This option assumes the continuation of the existing regional operational scenario. Therefore it is silent on what entity would own, maintain, and operate infrastructure and services that cross service area boundaries.

Planning

Regional Long Range Planning

The responsibility for the development of a multimodal long range regional transportation plan would remain with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). However it is anticipated that the MPO would give ample consideration to the regional transit system concept plan developed by the TSB.

Regional Long Range Transit Planning

The responsibility for the development of a regional transit system concept plan would be vested in the TSB. The TSB would prepare a regional system plan on a schedule consistent with the regional transportation plan update undertaken by the MPO. The TSB's plan would include large scale transit infrastructure investments, local bus service and circulator expansions, and operation and maintenance plans for the entire regional transit system.

Regional Service Planning

The TSB would have responsibility for planning service that crosses service area boundaries. For instance, the CCT Route 10 and MARTA Route 12 change that was implemented recently would have been a decision of the TSB if it had been in existence.

Local Service Planning

Responsibility for planning local bus routes that are wholly contained within one service area would rest with the local operators. For example, CCT would still responsible for planning all of its local routes that serve on Cobb County; likewise with MARTA, Gwinnett County, and C-Tran.

Operations

Construction and Operation of Fixed Guideway Infrastructure

The only fixed guideway infrastructure in place in the Atlanta region currently is the MARTA rail system. It is assumed that MARTA will continue to own, operate and maintain that infrastructure as well as any new fixed guideway infrastructure that is built wholly within its service area. However, the question of who will build, own and operate new fixed guideway infrastructure that crosses service area boundaries or is outside of the MARTA service area is unanswered in this scenario.

Operation of Local and Express Buses

Existing bus routes would continue to be operated by the entities that are currently operating them. New express routes would be operated by GRTA and new local routes that are completely within the service area of an existing provider would be operated by that provider. Operational responsibility for new routes that cross service area boundaries would be assigned by the TSB and cost structures for the operations these routes would be negotiated among the TSB and the affected jurisdictions.

Marketing and Customer Information

It is anticipated that all marketing efforts for the regional transit system would be conducted by the TSB. Marketing materials that are specific to individual systems will be the responsibility of those systems.

Customer information such as trip itinerary planning will be the responsibility of the TSB.

Funding

The TSB would assume Designated Recipient status, a role currently filled by MARTA. This would vest the TSB with the responsibility, in conjunction with the MPO, for the allocation of Section 5307 funds. Additionally, the TSB would be given the authority to make funding allocation decisions for all federal, state, and regional funds associated with transit in the metro Atlanta region.

Money provided by local governments or sources dedicated to existing organizations would remain in the control of those entities.

Legislation

It is anticipated that the General Assembly would have to act in order to create or enable the creation of the TSB.

Challenges and Issues

- TSB Allocates Funding for the region – both federal recipient and any new sources
- Performs regional transit planning (cross-county) and sets performance goals for the region
- Does the TSB construct and operate new services, just construct and turn over operation to another entity or neither?
- How does TSB make sure operation of cross-regional services occurs?

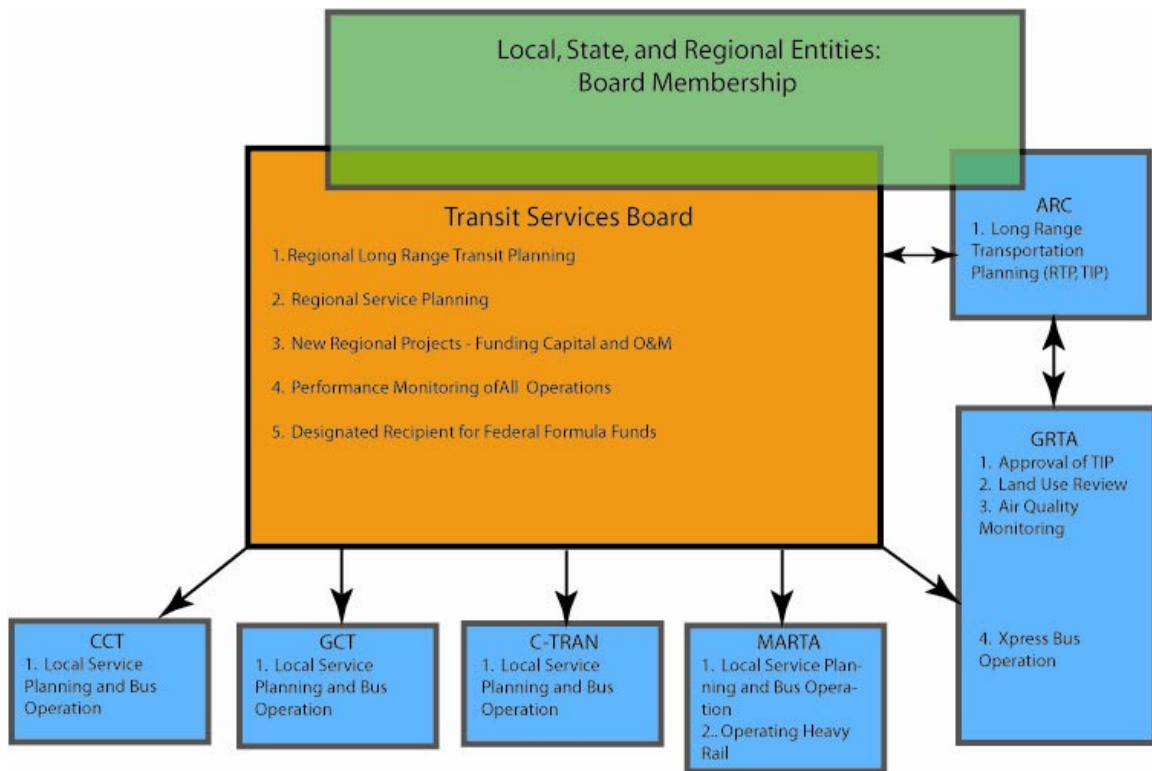


Figure 1 – Illustrative Representation of Organizational Relationships with a Transit Services Board

Option #2 – State Department of Intermodal Transportation

Scenario Description

The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) would be transformed into the Georgia Department of Intermodal Transportation (GDIT). GDIT would retain the authority currently granted to GRTA for approval of TIP documents, DRI reviews, and Air Quality monitoring in non-attainment areas of the state. GDIT would assume the roles of GDOT Intermodal Division, making it responsible for the statewide distribution of FTA, FRA, and FAA funds – essentially merging GDOT Intermodal into GRTA. Additionally, GDIT would have responsibility for the administration of the state's CMAQ funds. GDIT would be authorized to construct, own, operate, maintain infrastructure and/or services related to its mission. It would also administer the Public Transit, Aviation, Rail, and Port sections of the STIP and take on the role of providing air transportation to state departments. This would allow GDOT to focus on its core mission (as stated in Office of Planning and Budget's FY 2007 Report) of construction, maintenance and operation of the state's roads and bridges. GDOT's name would revert to its historic name of the Georgia State Highway Department.¹ Transforming GRTA into GDIT would likely result in the reconstitution of the GRTA Board depending upon the legislation creating the new department.

This scenario assumes the continuation of the existing operators. It also assumes that GDIT would have districts that mimic GDOT's current districts. It is possible that these districts could assume some operational responsibility for projects that do not fit neatly into an existing operator's service area.

Planning

Regional Long Range Planning

The responsibility for the development of a multimodal long range regional transportation plan would remain with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Regional Long Range Transit Planning

The responsibility for the development of a regional transit system concept plan could fall to the MPO or to the district office of the new state department.

If the MPO holds the responsibility, it would prepare a regional system plan in conjunction with the regional transportation plan. If the district office is responsible for the plan, it would prepare the plan on a schedule consistent with the regional transportation plan update undertaken by the MPO. In either case, the transit system concept plan would include large scale transit infrastructure investments, local bus service and circulator expansions, and operation and maintenance plans for the entire regional transit system.

Regional Service Planning

The GDIT district office would have responsibility for planning service that crosses service area boundaries. For instance, the CCT Route 10 and MARTA Route 12 change that was

¹ The Roles and Responsibilities of the Department of Transportation are defined as: "The Department of Transportation plans, constructs, maintains, and improves the state's roads and bridges; provides planning and financial support for other modes of transportation; and provides air travel to state departments.

implemented recently would have been a decision of the GDIT district office if it had been in existence.

Local Service Planning

Responsibility for planning local bus routes that are wholly contained within one service area would rest with the local operators. For example, CCT would still be responsible for planning all of its local routes that serve only Cobb County; likewise with MARTA, Gwinnett County, and C-Tran.

Operations

Construction and Operation of Fixed Guideway Infrastructure

The only fixed guideway infrastructure in place in the Atlanta region currently is the MARTA rail system. It is assumed that MARTA will continue to own, operate and maintain that infrastructure as well as any new fixed guideway infrastructure that is built wholly within its service area. However, it is assumed that the new state department will build, own and operate new fixed guideway infrastructure that crosses service area boundaries or is outside of the MARTA service area.

Operation of Local and Express Buses

Existing local bus routes would continue to be operated by the entities that are currently operating them. New local routes that are completely within the service area of an existing provider would be operated by that provider. Operational responsibility for new local routes that cross service area boundaries would be assigned by the GDIT district office and cost structures for the operations of these routes would be negotiated among the district office and the affected jurisdictions.

Existing and new express routes would be operated by GDIT.

Marketing and Customer Information

It is anticipated that all marketing efforts for the regional transit system would be conducted by GDIT. Marketing materials that are specific to individual systems will be the responsibility of those systems.

Customer information such as trip itinerary planning will be the responsibility of GDIT and could easily be integrated into the state's new 511 system.

Funding

GDIT would assume Designated Recipient status, a role currently filled by MARTA. This would vest the GDIT with the responsibility, in conjunction with the MPO, for the allocation of Section 5307 funds. Additionally, the GDIT would be given the authority to make funding allocation decisions for all federal, state, and regional funds associated with transit in the metro Atlanta region.

Money provided by local governments or sources dedicated to existing organizations would remain in the control of those entities.

Legislation

It is anticipated that the General Assembly would have to act in order to create the new state department.

Challenges and Issues

- GRTA and GDOT Intermodal Merged into new Department – Georgia Department of Intermodal Transportation
- Statewide Intermodal Program Run by GDIT
- Metro-planning done by metro-District office
- GRTA's Air Quality non-Attainment and Land-Use functions housed within GDIT
- Does District Office construct and operate regional transit services?
- What is the relationship with existing operators?

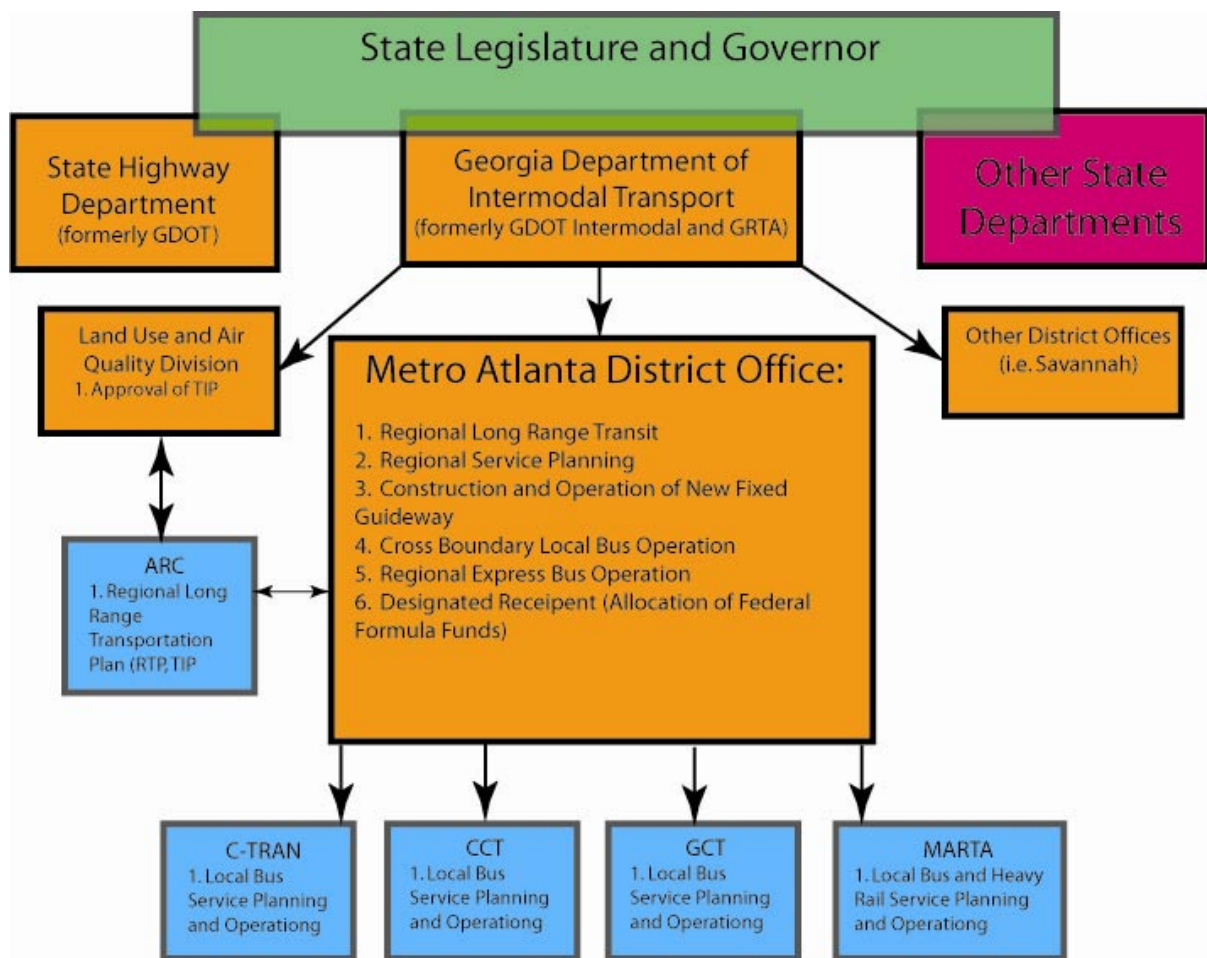


Figure 2 – Illustrative Representation of Organizational Relationships with a Georgia Department of Intermodal Transportation (GDIT)

Option #3 – MARTA Expansion

Scenario Description

Referenda to join the MARTA system would be held in Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett Counties with the intent that all three jurisdictions would vote to become part of the MARTA system. This would create a five county transit authority responsible for the operation of public transportation within those counties.

This option requires little to no change to any existing law, potentially no approval of the State of Georgia, and is mostly subject only to negotiations between Fulton and DeKalb Counties, the City of Atlanta, MARTA and the counties holding referenda. However, because Cobb County voted to not be a part of the MARTA system, there is a question as to whether the state legislature will have to take action again to allow the county to vote to become part of the system.

Planning

Regional Long Range Planning

The responsibility for the development of a multimodal long range regional transportation plan would remain with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Regional Long Range Transit Planning

The responsibility for the development of a regional transit system concept plan would be vested in the MPO. As a part of the development of the long range regional transportation plan or immediately preceding it in a distinct effort, the MPO would prepare a regional transit system plan which would include large scale transit infrastructure investments, local bus service and circulator expansions, and operation and maintenance plans for the entire regional transit system.

Regional Service Planning

Because all existing contiguous local bus service areas would be incorporated under a single administrative structure, no local bus routes are likely to cross service area boundaries. MARTA would have responsibility for planning all local and express bus routes in all five counties. If for some reason, it was necessary for local bus service to expand out of the new MARTA service area, MARTA could negotiate with the jurisdiction in question to provide that service.

Concerning express bus service, MARTA would also be responsible for planning all express bus routes that are completely within its new service area. Express routes that extend outside of this service area would continue to be planned by GRTA.

Local Service Planning

Responsibility for planning local bus routes that are wholly contained within the new MARTA service area would be planned by MARTA. If need arises for local bus service outside of this service area, the affected jurisdiction do its own planning or negotiate with MARTA to provide that service.

Operations

Construction and Operation of Fixed Guideway Infrastructure

The only fixed guideway infrastructure in place in the Atlanta region currently is the MARTA rail system. It is assumed that MARTA will continue to own, operate and maintain that infrastructure as well as any new fixed guideway infrastructure that is built wholly within its new service area.

However, the question of who will build, own and operate new fixed guideway infrastructure that crosses service area boundaries or is outside of the MARTA service area is unanswered in this scenario.

Operation of Local and Express Buses

Existing and new local and express bus routes entirely within the new MARTA service area would be operated by MARTA. Existing and new express routes with an origin or destination outside of the new MARTA service area would be operated by GRTA.

If there is a need for new local routes in a jurisdiction outside the new MARTA service area the jurisdiction in question operate those routes itself or it could negotiate to have MARTA operate the routes.

Marketing and Customer Information

It is anticipated that all marketing and customer information efforts for the new MARTA service area would be conducted by MARTA. GRTA would continue to handle its own marketing for the routes it continues to operate.

Funding

MARTA would continue to function as the designated recipient and would continue to collect the penny sales tax in Fulton and DeKalb Counties. Additionally, MARTA would begin to collect whatever sales tax was collected in the counties that pass the referendum. Use of these funds would be governed by the newly constituted MARTA board.

Legislation

It is possible that since Cobb County voted not to be a part of the MARTA system, the state legislature would have to act again to allow the county to vote to become part of the new MARTA service area. In any case, local referenda would have to be held in each of the counties in order to implement this structure.

Challenges and Issues

- What steps are necessary to allow Clayton, Cobb and/or Gwinnett to hold a referendum?
- New referendum system required
- What changes will be required to the MARTA governing structure?
- What happens for services outside of the 5-county area?
- Do CCT, GCT, and C-TRAN retain identities as subsidiary of MARTA for local in-county services?

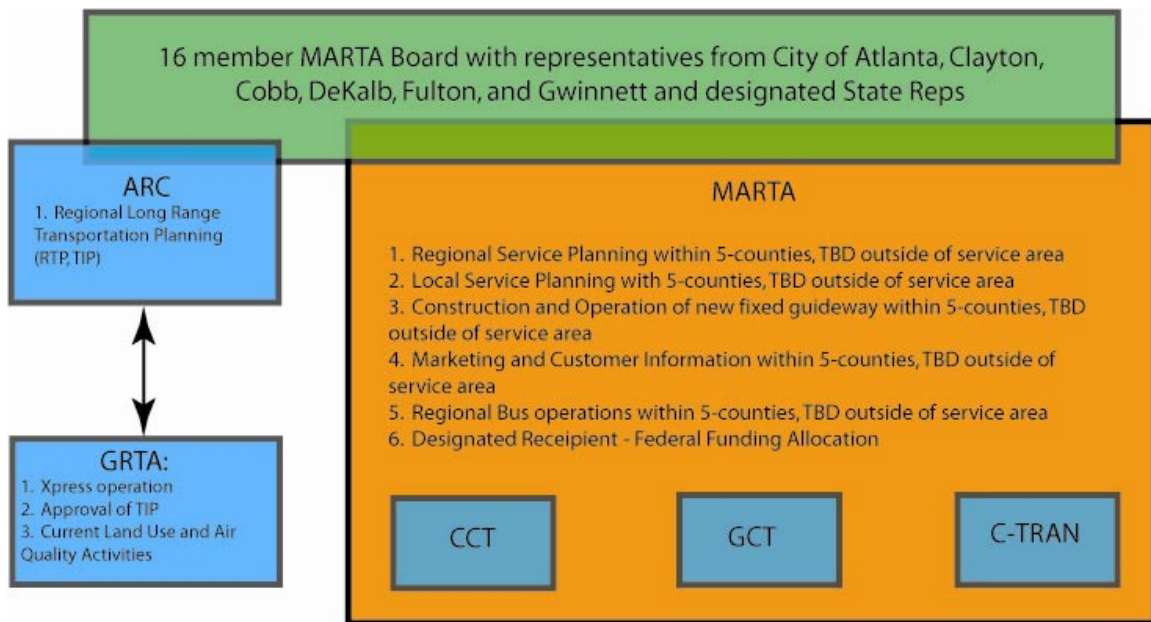


Figure 3 – Illustrative Representation of Organizational Relationships with a five-county MARTA System

Option #4 – MARTA Division

Scenario Description

MARTA would be split into a transit management authority and a private transit operations company similar to Veolia or FirstTransit.

The Regional Transit Management Authority (RTMA) would contract out services and provide regional support for data collection, performance measuring, legislative activities, fare collection, etc. The RTMA would function in a manner similar to CCT and Gwinnett by focusing on provision of services through contracting out the service operations like CCT and Gwinnett do with Veolia which could allow greater control over operational costs and eliminate the occasional labor disputes. The RTMA would, at a minimum, encompass the five core counties of the region and would essentially act for these counties in the capacity in which MARTA currently acts for C-TRAN through the management contract with Clayton County. All transit based capital assets that currently belong to the counties or operators would become the property of the RTMA. The Board of the RTMA will be constructed in such a way as to adequately represent all jurisdictions on whose behalf it contracts for service.

MARTA would plan a staged transition for its operations division. One approach would be to select a package of routes, perhaps 20%, to be bid on and have the MARTA Operations Group bid on providing the services, encouraging reasonable competition for the bid. This allows the Operations Group to get used to preparing bids for competitive tendering. Then as the number of bidded routes increase, the operations Group is allowed to bid on outside contracts – such as competitive bidding to operate transit systems in other regions, allowing the Operations Group to begin to receive revenue from outside sources. The final stage is where all of the Authority's routes are bid out and the Operations Groups is likely to be operating some of the routes as well as other systems and is essentially a competitor to Veolia, First Transit, and McDonnell Transit.

Contracts in place with private sector for the operation of the Gwinnett and CCT systems would just be transferred to the RTMA.

The GRTA Xpress Bus system would remain intact and operated by the State. Any contracts currently existing between GRTA and other operators would be transferred to the RTMA.

Planning

Regional Long Range Planning

The responsibility for the development of a multimodal long range regional transportation plan would remain with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Regional Long Range Transit Planning

The responsibility for the development of a regional transit system concept plan would be vested in the MPO. As a part of the development of the long range regional transportation plan or immediately preceding it in a distinct effort, the MPO would prepare a regional transit system plan which would include large scale transit infrastructure investments, local bus

service and circulator expansions, and operation and maintenance plans for the entire regional transit system.

Regional Service Planning

Because all existing contiguous local bus service areas would be incorporated under a single managerial structure, no local bus routes are likely to cross service area boundaries. The RTMA would have responsibility for planning all local and express bus routes in all five counties. If for some reason, it was necessary for local bus service to expand out of the new RTMA service area, RTMA could negotiate with the jurisdiction in question to provide that service.

Concerning express bus service, the RTMA would also be responsible for planning all express bus routes that are completely within its new service area. Express routes that extend outside of this service area would continue to be planned by GRTA.

Local Service Planning

Responsibility for planning local bus routes that are wholly contained within the new RTMA service area would be planned by RTMA. If need arises for local bus service outside of this service area, the affected jurisdiction could do its own planning or negotiate with RTMA to provide that service.

Operations

Construction and Operation of Fixed Guideway Infrastructure

The only fixed guideway infrastructure in place in the Atlanta region currently is the MARTA rail system. It is assumed that RTMA will assume ownership of the MARTA assets. The RTMA would then contract with the Operations Group to operate and maintain that infrastructure as well as any other assets within its new service area.

With regard to the question of constructing, owning, and operate new fixed guideway infrastructure within the RTMA service area, the RTMA could let design/build/operate/maintain (DBOM) contracts for new infrastructure.

The question of who will build, own, and operate new infrastructure that crosses service area boundaries or is outside of the RTMA service area is unanswered in this scenario.

Operation of Local and Express Buses

Existing and new local and express bus routes entirely within the new RTMA service area would be operated by the new Operations Group or by other private operators under contract to the RTMA. Existing and new express routes with an origin or destination outside of the new RTMA service area would be operated by GRTA.

If there is a need for new local routes in a jurisdiction outside the new RTMA service area, the jurisdiction in question will operate those routes itself or negotiate to have the RTMA operate the routes.

Marketing and Customer Information

It is anticipated that all marketing and customer information efforts for the new RTMA service area would be conducted by RTMA. GRTA would continue to handle its own marketing for the routes it continues to operate.

Funding

The RTMA would function as the designated recipient and would collect the penny sales tax in Fulton and DeKalb Counties. Additionally, RTMA would receive some form of payment from the other existing operators in direct proportion to the cost of operating any existing or new services in these counties. Use of these funds would be governed by the newly constituted RTMA board.

Legislation

It is not likely that any state legislative action would be required.

Challenges and Issues

- MARTA is divided into a management and an operating company
- MARTA Management retains ownership of infrastructure, plans and contracts services, performs NTD federal designated recipient
- MARTA operations division becomes an operating company similar to Veolia or First Transit. Probably renamed and bids on work outside of Atlanta
- Relationship between the two new entities becomes similar to CCT with Veolia
- Who constructs and operates new services outside of the 5-county area?

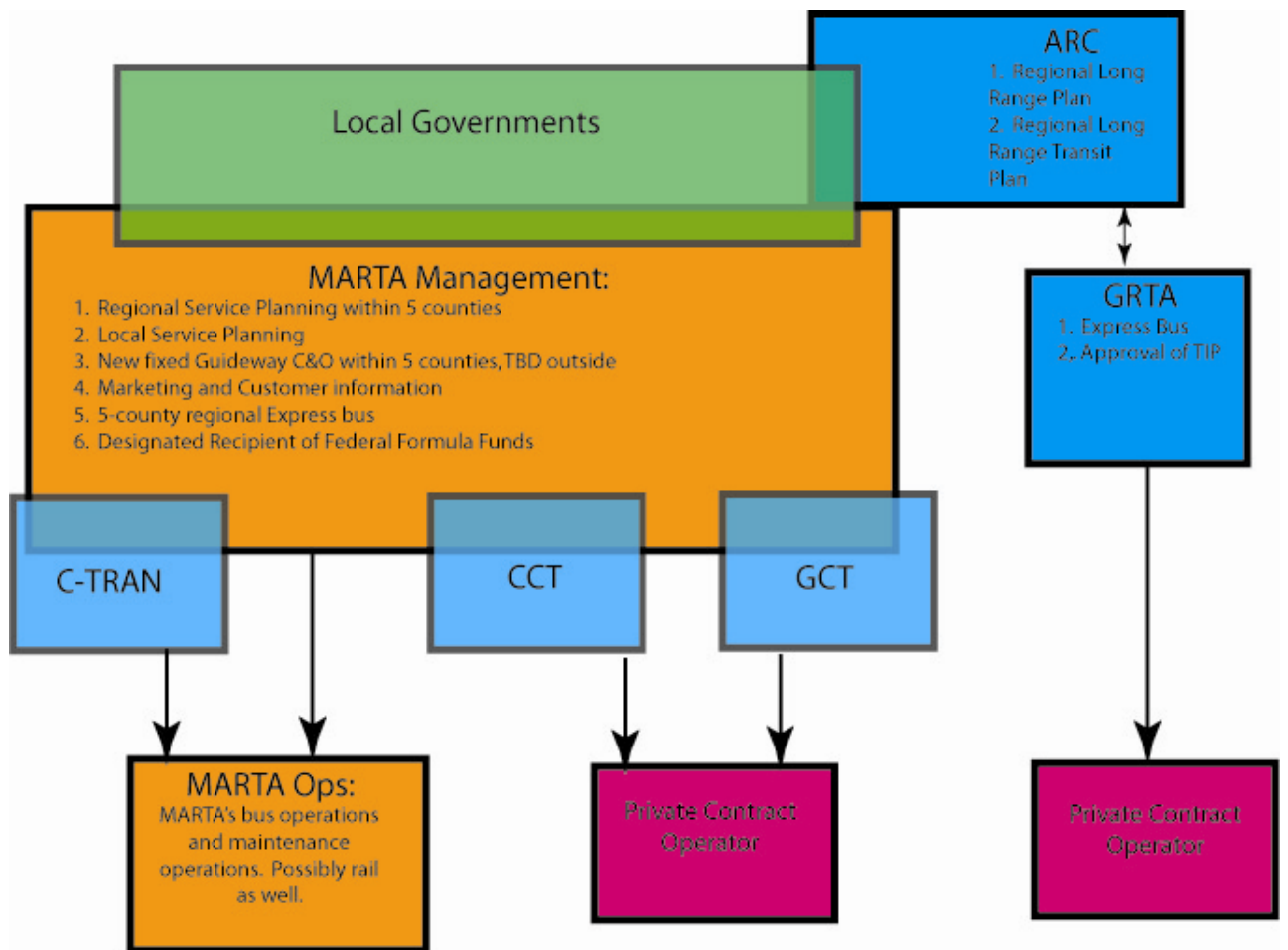


Figure 4 – Illustrative Representation of Organizational Relationships with splitting MARTA into an Management and Operation Company

Option #5 – Regional Funding and Project Management Agency

Scenario Description

A regional funding and project management agency would be created and endowed with a regional funding source. This agency would function as the project selection agency for the metropolitan region and have the ability to construct projects if there is no clearly identified sponsor or the local sponsor does not have the wherewithal to complete project implementation.

For discussion purposes, assume this funding and selection agency is called the Public Agency for Project Implementation (PAPI) and that it is housed at the Atlanta Regional Commission. Further assume that the funding is provided by a 10-county regional SPLOST available to be used on transit projects including operating expenses. PAPI would be able to contract for project delivery and issue debt for the selected projects within the RTP and monitor project implementation through an annual report. PAPI would not become a transit operator, but could help finance transit infrastructure and operations and would be the entity responsible for managing the regional SPLOST monies, project selection, and construction projects or regional significance.

This scenario does not address the issues of what entity would operate cross-jurisdictional transit services.

Planning

Regional Long Range Planning

The responsibility for the development of a multimodal long range regional transportation plan would remain with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Regional Long Range Transit Planning

The responsibility for the development of a regional transit system concept plan would be vested in the MPO in as much as PAPI is attached to the ARC. As a part of the development of the long range regional transportation plan or immediately preceding it in a distinct effort, the MPO would prepare a regional transit system plan which would include large scale transit infrastructure investments, local bus service and circulator expansions, and operation and maintenance plans for the entire regional transit system.

Regional Service Planning

In the absence of a regional transit operational entity, regional service planning would continue to be conducted as it is currently conducted – by the multiple existing operators. It is possible that PAPI could be asked to manage regional and cross-jurisdictional express and local service planning, but this would require additional staff.

Local Service Planning

Responsibility for planning local bus routes will remain with local operators.

Operations

Construction and Operation of Fixed Guideway Infrastructure

It is assumed that ownership and operation of existing assets will remain with the current owners/operators of those assets.

With regard to the question of constructing, owning, and operating new fixed guideway infrastructure, PAPI would be enabled to either construct infrastructure itself or to let design/build contracts for new infrastructure.

The question of who will own and operate new infrastructure built by PAPI is left open. It is possible, potentially even necessary, for PAPI to own the infrastructure and contract for or even grant the right to operation of the assets to an existing public operator.

Operation of Local and Express Buses

Existing and new local and express bus routes would continue to be the responsibility of the existing operators.

This scenario makes no explicit provision for how new local routes crossing jurisdictional boundaries or in a jurisdiction that does not currently have a service provider will be implemented. It is possible for PAPI to be given the responsibility for resolving this question after its creation.

Marketing and Customer Information

It is anticipated that all marketing and customer information would continue to be handled the existing operators for their own systems.

Funding

PAPI would function as the designated recipient and would collect the regional funding source. Use of these funds would be controlled by the governance structure of PAPI.

Legislation

It is likely that state legislative action would be required in order to enable the creation of PAPI.

Challenges and Issues

- Regional implementation agency created to implement projects, both transit and non-transit
- Administers and distributes new funding source and becomes designated recipient
- Who owns and operates the infrastructure once it is constructed?
- Who operates any new local cross-county services?

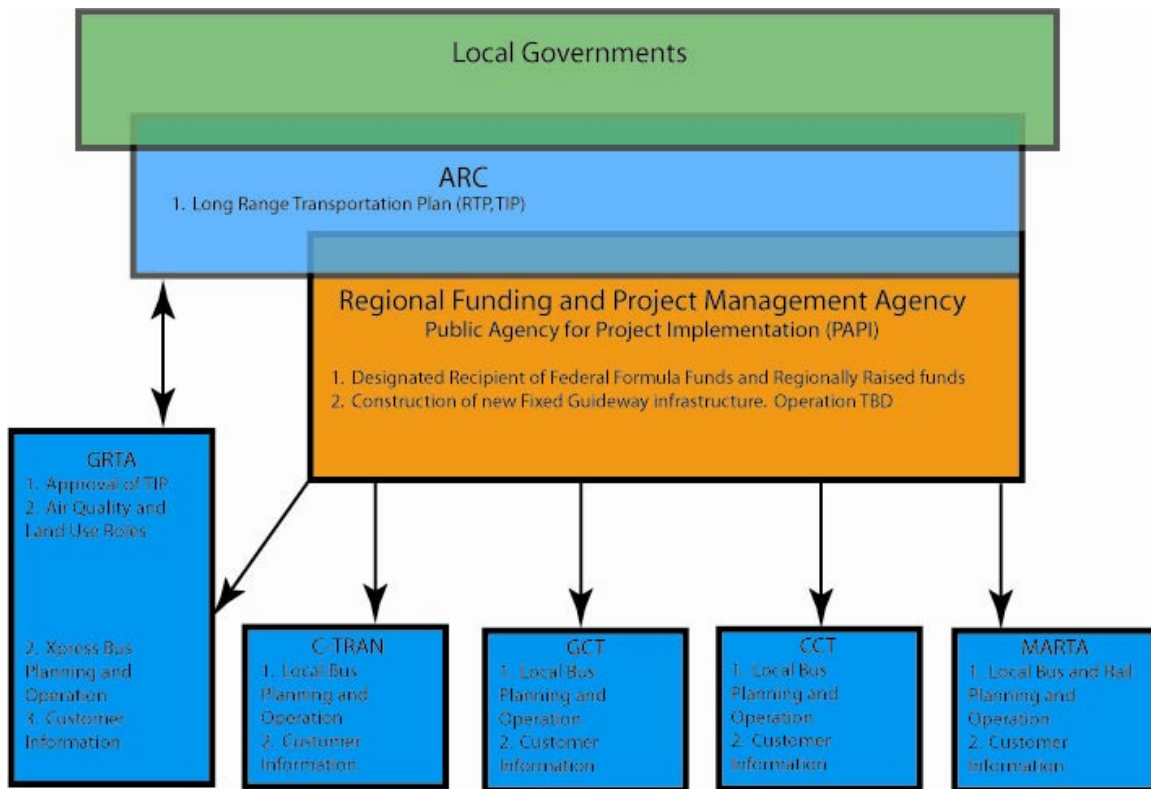


Figure 5 – Illustrative Representation of Organizational Relationships with a Regional Funding and Project Management Agency

Option #6 – Regional Operating Company

Scenario Description

Create a regional operating company owned and controlled by existing local governments. For convenience of illustration, this operating company is called the *Piedmont Transportation Association (PTA)*. Its initial owners could be MARTA, Cobb County, Gwinnett County, Clayton County, and Douglas County. Each of the owners agrees to contribute some amount of capital and operating assets over 10 years. This would capitalize the PTA at a given level to operate an agreed upon series of regional bus routes (routes that cross jurisdiction lines) such as the CCT 10, MARTA 12, C-TRAN 501, and the Douglas Multi-modal center. Each owner has voting rights to elect a board like any publicly traded company with the percentage of each vote based upon the committed resources. If a specific owner provided more assets, such as a dedication of specific amount of annual operating money or a capital asset, their ownership in the PTA would increase proportionally, similar to buying additional stock in the Coca-Cola Company. The PTA itself would be responsible for operating the specified routes and any other regional routes. It could, if desired, be responsible for building, operating, and maintaining regional fixed-guideway projects which do not have an identified operating entity.

All existing operators would continue to exist and function in the way they currently function.

Planning

Regional Long Range Planning

The responsibility for the development of a multimodal long range regional transportation plan would remain with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Regional Long Range Transit Planning

The responsibility for the development of a regional transit system concept plan would be vested in the MPO. As a part of the development of the long range regional transportation plan or immediately preceding it in a distinct effort, the MPO would prepare a regional transit system plan which would include large scale transit infrastructure investments, local bus service and circulator expansions, and operation and maintenance plans for the entire regional transit system.

Regional Service Planning

The PTA would be responsible for regional local bus service planning. For instance, local bus routes that cross existing service area boundaries would be planned by the PTA.

Local Service Planning

The responsibility for planning local bus routes that are wholly contained within an existing service area would remain with the existing service provider.

Operations

Construction and Operation of Fixed Guideway Infrastructure

It is assumed that ownership and operation of existing assets will remain with existing providers unless those providers choose to transfer their assets to the PTA.

With regard to the question of constructing, owning, and operating new fixed guideway infrastructure, the PTA would be enabled to either construct and operate infrastructure itself or to let design/build/operate/maintain contracts for new infrastructure of regional significance.

Operation of Local and Express Buses

Existing and new local and express bus routes within the PTA service area would be operated by the PTA.

Express routes outside the PTA service area would be operated by GRTA.

Marketing and Customer Information

It is anticipated that all marketing and customer information would be handled by individual operators for their respective services.

Funding

This scenario suggests no change to the existing funding mechanism except for the capitalization of the PTA itself.

Legislation

It is unlikely that state legislative action would be required in order to enable the creation of PTA.

Challenges and Issues

- Possible to form without new funding sources
- Not all existing operators would have to join
- Focused exclusively on cross-county service provision and operation, including new infrastructure if funding is available
- Would any new funding be directed towards agency?
- For new services (i.e. regional local bus, commuter rail), is this one company with different divisions, or separate companies?

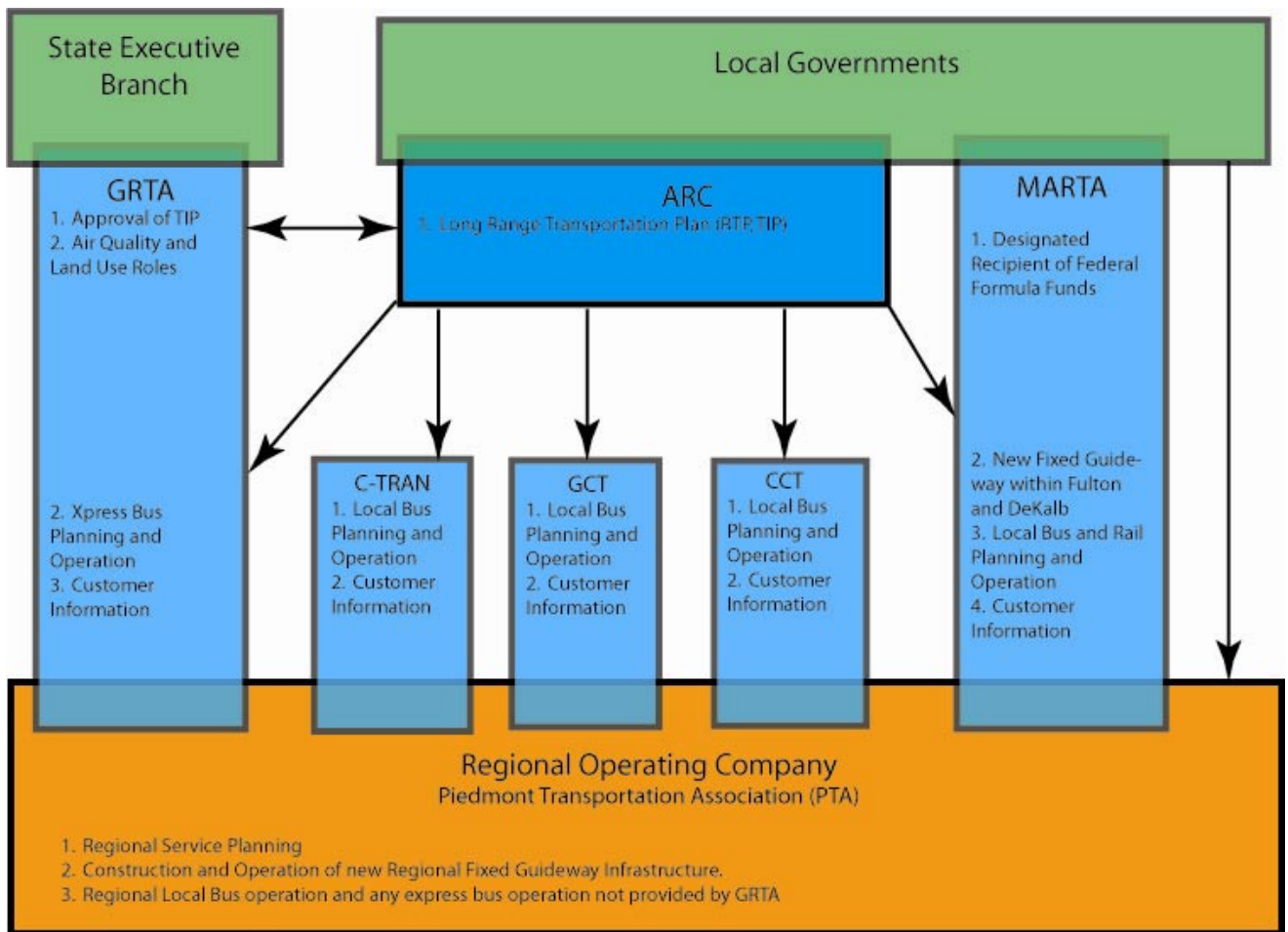


Figure 6 – Illustrative Representation of Organizational Relationships with a Regional Operating Company